

OLPIN MORTUARY HISTORY

Mortuary business in Pleasant Grove was not large enough to support two families so Joseph and Lewis looked at other areas to locate a branch office. They had placed a down payment on another mortuary in Utah County when they learned that another mortuary was opening there. In October of 1928, Joseph & Violet Olpin with their three oldest children came to Heber City and opened a mortuary facility. They, Lewis & Joseph, purchased the Joseph A. Rasband home and converted it into a mortuary.

Each hamlet, Heber, Midway, Charleston, Wallsburg, Center Creek, Daniels, Keetley, Kamas, Woodland, Francis, etc. had its own registrar of Vital Statistics. Now each county and some multicounties have registrars. Early on a carpenter in each community was designated as a "Casket Builder." Later on furniture stores sold caskets, Kings store in Kamas and Winterrose in Heber City.

In each hamlet there was a core of care givers, frequently ward priesthood and relief society leaders. Their assignment was to care for and dress the deceased, especially in temple clothing. On hot summer days the men would travel to the high mountain country to obtain snow in order to slow decomposition. Most often, an all night vigil would take place, usually by the women, in order to change the snow packs at regular intervals. I assume that through these long nights, and very early morning hours, stories were told. I have understood that some of these sisters became quite adapt at telling ghost stories. Occasionally today after an advertised viewing, families will request that casket and remains be taken home.

Along with mortuary responsibilities, local funeral homes in rural areas had the responsibility to provide ambulance service. This aspect of service was never profitable and required much unavailable time demands. It also required great expense in training as well as buying and upkeep of equipment. Rewards of rendering service to those in need leaves memories of many heartwarming experiences in helping others. Because of governmental regulations requiring much newer and sophisticated equipment and training, Olpin Ambulance Service ended in 1965 in Wasatch, Summit and Duchesne Counties. Today, this area is serviced by several ambulances and many trained personnel to perform this important service in the various counties.

When Joseph and Violet first moved to Heber City, it was the intent that they would alternate with Lewis and Margaret, exchanging communities every six

months. The people of the areas, Duchesne, Summit and Wasatch Counties opened their arms and hearts to this new young family in their midst. By the time six months had passed, Heber City was home to Joseph and Violet for the balance of their lifetimes.

It immediately became evident that floral facilities were needed by the community, so Violet yielded to the pressure and started a floral service. in 1937 or 1938, when a young florist named Joseph Lawrence came and asked Violet about purchasing the floral business. She very anxiously told him that she would sell it to him for \$1.00 and that she would give him that dollar. Thus commenced a very close and meaningful relationship with the Joseph Olpin and Joseph Lawrence families, and relieved Violet of the time consuming floral business.

Depression years brought special challenges of serving families who had no monetary resources. Some people paid funeral bills by working them out. Others might pay with a pig or a cow. Joseph and Violet loved people and some way of payment seemed to be worked out in most cases. Even with these difficult times, Olpin Mortuary in Heber City was expanded in 1937-38.

Roy Olpin, brother of Lewis and Joseph, trained under their direction and attended school in St. Louis and was helped in purchasing a mortuary in Fillmore.

World War II brought new challenges with lack of available men in the work force. Younger members of the family were pressed into service to perform car washing, yard work, housecleaning, home repairs and many facets of the business. Caskets that were constructed of metal were unavailable so substitutes, such as plastic, wood-grained wooden caskets and others, some of them not of the quality that they had been used to, had to fill the bill. Gasoline and tire rationing was always a problem, and took time standing in line to get stamps. One enterprising young stake primary president approached Joseph to make a bus out of the funeral coach. She wanted to take her stake board members to general primary conference in Salt Lake City. Joseph, realizing that this good sister was seeking newspaper publicity informed her that he would not make a bus of his funeral coach. He would begin as early in the morning as necessary and make as many trips as needed to transport their members to the conference.

Finally the war ended and "Johnny came marching home." Joseph E. "Ted" came to train under Joseph and Elwood Sundberg trained under his father-in-law, Lewis. Ted attended school in Chicago at Worsham College. With the younger generation moving into the business, the partnership relationship between Lewis

and Joseph ended. Joseph and Ted entered a partnership relationship when leaders of church and community from Roosevelt encouraged them to open a mortuary in the Uintah Basin. Ted and his family moved to Roosevelt in 1948 establishing the Olpin Mortuary in that area.

In 1952 Carl Rippon, son-in-law of George M. Archer approached Joseph to purchase the mortuary in Park City. Terms were agreed upon and Olpin Mortuary in Park City became a reality. Guy Olpin, who had commenced training in 1951 under Joseph Olpin was called to service in the Army that year. Upon completion of his military service in 1954, he married Shirley Hewitson and went to Los Angeles, California to attend California College of Mortuary Science. Olpin Mortuary in Heber City was remodled and expanded in 1957-58. In 1960, Olpin Mortuary in Heber City, Park City and Roosevelt were incorporated with Joseph, Ted and Guy as owners. In 1970, Joseph Olpin retired with Guy and Shirley purchasing Olpin Mortuary in Heber and Park City, and Ted purchasing Olpin Mortuary in Roosevelt. In 1973 Olpin Mortuary in Park City on Main Street was sold and a new facility was built on Highway 248 East. In 1976, Guy and Shirley purchased the Crandall Funeral Home in Kamas and established the Olpin Mortuary in that area.

As population and economic trends changed in Park City, many of the older population left for warmer climate and younger transient population moved in. As property taxes increased by 1600% and with business licenses and fees keeping pace, and property values sky-rocketing, the Olpin Mortuary property was sold in 1980. Olpin Mortuary in Kamas was sold back to the Crandall family in 1986.

Over the years many friendships and business relationships have developed. Olpin Mortuary in Heber City continues to serve these as well as new residents of those Summit County Communities out of their Heber Mortuary.

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